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The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
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DEAR MEMBER,

We have been asked what American Churches are doing to help the people of Europe. Friends of the News-Letter in the United States have kindly sent us information.

AMERICAN CHURCHES AND EUROPEAN RELIEF

An appeal for funds for Christian Reconstruction in Europe and Asia has been issued by the Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Rehabilitation, acting on behalf of all the non-Roman Churches in America. This money is for the long-term project of assisting the work of the Churches and of Christian schools and hospitals in all countries where it has been destroyed by the war.

Last October, following on the grim reports on conditions in Europe received from American officers of the World Council of Churches who had travelled extensively on the continent, a nation-wide appeal was made for clothing and household goods. There has already been a big response throughout the Churches to these appeals.

People in this country do not realize how difficult it is for Americans, living in a land of immense productivity, both agricultural and industrial, and far removed from the European continent, to be keenly aware of the stringency of conditions there. Rationing ended in America in November; since then, consumption has risen by 11 per cent over the average consumption for 1934–39; meat consumption is up by 33 per cent on those years. The administration waits upon public opinion, and little has so far been said from Washington to inform the American people of the terrible conditions prevailing in Europe, or to place before them the need for sending vastly larger supplies.

The Churches of America did a magnificent piece of service, for which Christians in this country are keenly grateful, when they organized, in October, a lightning campaign to mobilize public opinion in favour of passing the bill to authorize a contribution of 1,350,000,000 dollars for U.N.R.R.A. in 1946. Local Councils of Churches took action through the radio, in the press, in the pulpit; and messages were received in Washington from many parts of the country. American support of U.N.R.R.A. is the most important

single factor in the whole picture of relief for Europe, and that the Churches of America are anxious that it should be strongly supported, is good news.

The most that can be done by the Churches and voluntary bodies will only be a drop in a bucket. But we can make a moral demonstration that people in our two countries *care*.[1]

We in this food-importing island look to the United States as the largest source of help for Europe, but in no critical or self-satisfied spirit. Some at least of us are aware that there are still things which this country could do, and that our 2,800 calories a day, though dull, are adequate. The frequently expressed fear that we are inadequately fed and a likely prey for epidemics is denied by competent medical authorities. Conditions in Poland, Yugoslavia, parts of Hungary and parts of Austria are terrible,[2] and make it difficult to understand how Mr. Attlee can maintain the full logic of the position adopted in his reply [3] to the memorial of "Save Europe Now" that "It would not be possible for any Government to make the standard of life of its people dependent on conditions, however brought about, in countries over which they have no control."

THE UNIVERSITIES

Our Supplement this week is a long one. The subject may seem to some of our readers to be the concern only of the small minority who teach or are taught in universities. The paper was in fact written for a group whose members were not, for the most part, actively concerned in the life of the universities, and their criticisms have been incorporated in it.

There are two reasons for giving special attention to the universities at the present time. A larger proportion of the nation's ablest boys and girls will find their way to the universities as the result of expanding educational opportunity; they will occupy many of the most influential positions in society, and their training is of national importance. Secondly, as our Supplement shows, the question of the future of the universities involves the question of the relation of Christianity to society, for the older universities were a product of medieval Christendom, and they have for centuries been the guardians in society of certain values which we associate

[1] Readers ask us to reprint the following addresses. Gifts for Christian Reconstruction in Europe, 21 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C. 1. Gifts (in cash, not kind) for food for Europe to COBSRA, 75 Victoria Street, London, S.W. 1. Addresses to which to send clothing are supplied from the latter adress.

[2] See the *Economist* of January 26th. [3] Full text in *The Times* of January 29th.

with a welding together of the Christian tradition and classical culture. There has not taken place within the universities a comparable synthesis between the old classical-Christian tradition and the new and vigorous growth of scientific knowledge and method of the past four centuries. The two jostle uneasily within the organizational structure of the university which holds them together, but anything resembling a common view of the world and of the nature of reality, based on the insights of both, is not to be found in the universities—how much less elsewhere. The effect on the minds of students is confusing and disintegrating.

The products of the schools, and older men and women returning from the forces, are now crowding universities and colleges to capacity. To generalize about the attitude of this student generation would be rash, even though there are many observers watching the mixture with the keenest interest. A friend of the News-Letter at one university writes of " an indifference to great issues (a form of mental laziness) and the already evident signs of a confident near-nihilism among some students." Another, in a very different university, speaks of the aggressive pacifism emerging among young students as if to say, " we make it doubly clear that we were in no way responsible for what has taken place "—a reaction perhaps against too much of " the-future-lies-with-youth " stuff given them by their elders. For some the university has been an eagerly longed-for experience which proves difficult of assimilation after years of practical routine. Others look in vain to the university to bring some wholeness into their thinking ; narrowly academic or severely practical courses do not interpret their own experience for them, and leave the big questions unanswered and even unasked.

The university avoids such embarrassing and controversial profundities ; they must be left to individual dons, each to his taste, and to unofficial organizations working among students. The Student Christian Movement suffers lightning changes from brilliance to mediocrity from one swiftly passing student generation to the next, but for years it has tried to help students to answer the big questions. It is now giving a very sensitive ear to the universities and colleges, planning to meet new needs, and recruiting for the purpose, especially from younger men and women with service experience, an able and enthusiastic staff.

HOW SHALL A MAN LIVE ?

The number of students in any generation who are really exercised by the question " how shall a man live—what is life for, and how can it be lived to its full ? " is small. The great majority spend their time between concentration upon work and distraction

by sport, cinemas, the opposite sex and home concerns. Those who seek a radical answer, who want to know how to bend their lives to a single end, are tending to look in one or other of two directions. There is, on the one hand, a strong urge to withdraw from the world, to abandon civilization to the ruin from which no power on earth seems likely to save it, and either to cultivate one's soul in some small community or, while living in the world, to take up an attitude of mental aloofness eschewing all political action.

On the other hand is the powerful attraction of communism. It is unfortunate that we have to use this word for something which is both wider and more subtle than the two images of the Russian state and the Communist Party, which this word commonly evokes. What we mean is whole-hog political action based on the Marxist analysis, aimed at radical change of the present ordering of society. Christians consistently underestimate the challenge of Marxism. We learn to refute its tenets in our intellectual cradles, and few of us understand its emotional appeal. For this reason Alexander Miller's little book, *The Christian Significance of Karl Marx*,[1] is opportune. Mr. Miller does the fullest justice to the Marxist view of history. In times of crisis, when the whole structure of society is shaken, men are compelled to ask questions about the meaning of history. Karl Marx gives then a clear and dogmatic answer. Christians, as Mr. Miller points out, have an interpretation of history equally radical, but they have very largely forsaken it.

We have not, as yet, in this country been compelled by events to face the full challenge of revolutionary communism. Our form of government is still able to give us a measure of both efficiency and freedom. If there should come signs of a breakdown in efficiency, then we shall see the full strength of communism, and the strength of its attraction for the younger generation will be revealed.

The question remains whether there is not a third choice, not mid-way between the world renunciation of the Yogi, and the revolutionary political action of the communist, but quite other. The outward form of Christendom has crumbled away, but we still have a chance of rescuing its inner content. Central to the conception of Christendom is the belief that power can be restrained by law, and that the result is not inefficiency, but order and progress. But unless younger men and women are prepared to do political battle the third choice will not become a living one.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Bliss

[1] S.C.M. Press, 6s.

THE FUTURE OF OUR UNIVERSITIES

For good or evil the influence of the universities is enormous. In our own country they have long been the chief agency for the performance of two essential tasks. The first is the training of an *élite*. This has always been true of the "learned" professions—clergy, lawyers and doctors; and in modern times it has been extended to many other callings, e.g. notably, to the higher technicians in industry and to the teachers in secondary schools. In particular the universities have trained most of the statesmen and the vast majority of the higher Civil Service. Secondly, they have been the chief centres of the higher learning and of organized research.

At the outbreak of war there were five university students in this country for every two in 1900; and of these the large majority were at "Redbrick" and not at "Oxbridge."[1] The rapid growth of the modern universities has coincided with, and largely depended on, the growth of secondary education; and in many respects the contrast between Redbrick and Oxbridge resembles that between a municipal secondary school and Eton or Winchester.

The revolutionary forward drive in education, of which the Butler Act is one effect, is reflected in the universities, though they are little in the limelight, have not been the subject of political controversy and are considerably more independent of control from outside than are the schools. One outward sign of this is the recent increase in the Treasury annual grant for university purposes by 150 per cent, with the promise of substantially more in two years' time. But behind this is a new sense of urgency and a ferment of discussion, both within and without the universities, as to their purpose, function and policies. It is asked what the nation really wants of its universities. To this most necessary question foolish and disastrous answers are possible. There is urgent need of an informed public opinion and of the discovery of the right criteria.

The following problems and challenges seem particularly urgent:—

1. The traditional British university ideal has been embodied in Oxbridge, and Redbrick's present inability to reproduce it is glaring. What then is to be done about Redbrick? What is its claim to special consideration and help? This is the theme of Bruce Truscot's book.

[1] These are terms used by Bruce Truscot in his book *Red Brick University* (Faber, 10s. 6d.) to describe the modern and ancient universities of England respectively. It is important to realize that London and the Scottish universities are different in many ways from both, although they approximate more to "Redbrick" than to "Oxbridge."

2. The adequacy of the Oxbridge ideal itself for the modern world is challenged. What revision does it require? How far, if it could, should Redbrick seek to imitate Oxbridge? [1]

3. In both types it has been the accepted principle that truth is to be pursued for its own sake irrespective of ulterior consequences. The professed object is to know rather than to get or to do. The academic thinker has aimed at being liberal and not utilitarian, and, on controversial questions, neutral and not partisan. Both the value and the honesty of such an aim are being challenged, and the challenge comes from Christian as well as from secularist quarters.[2]

4. University autonomy is a principle of peculiar sanctity, but the need for a more deliberate planning is widely acknowledged. How is planning to be reconciled with freedom and in particular what is to be the relation of the universities to the State? This important matter can be no more than glanced at here.

"REDBRICK'S" DIFFICULTIES

The traditional British university ideal is derived from the experience of Oxbridge, and its classical statement occurs in Newman's *Idea of a University*. Three of its chief ingredients are the following:—

1. Being mainly collegiate, the older English universities throw together under one roof—yet in conditions of living which allow much individual independence—students of all sorts of backgrounds and pursuing every kind of study. A most valuable part of their education is that which they get, spontaneously and informally, from one another in free discussion and the process of mutual adjustment. The freshman is plunged into a new and thrilling experience and he becomes a life-member of a great society. Also, through the tutorial system, he is brought into an intimate association with his teachers which encourages, between senior and junior, the unhurried give and take of mind with mind. Thus the university is conceived as "an *Alma Mater*, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry or a mint or a treadmill."

2. Historic buildings of grey stone or mellow brick, green lawns, the ritual of Hall, Chapel or Senate-House give space and dignity and a sense of entering into a great tradition. Much of the educational influence of Oxbridge is indirect. It is notoriously due to atmosphere, "the genius of the place," and is soaked in as it were through the pores of the skin.

3. Oxbridge has aimed at giving a firm basis of general culture on which any necessary professional knowledge can be built later. As Newman puts it, the object of the system is to give the student

[1] *The Universities in Transformation*, Adolf Löwe (Sheldon Press, 1s. 6d.).
[2] *The University and the Modern World*, Arnold Nash (S.C.M. Press, 12s. 6d.).

a mental enlargement comparable with what an intelligent traveller gets from seeing the world. But there is to be no passive reception of " an unmeaning profusion of subjects." The student is encouraged to relate all newly acquired knowledge to what he knew before and to see things as a whole, just as, by going up to a high place, a man may see the countryside spread out before him and so understand the relation between its different features. The supreme aim is to train judgment, " that master-principle of business, literature and talent which gives a man strength in any subject he chooses to grapple with and enables him to seize the strong point in it." Premature specialism is to be avoided, for judgment lives by comparison and discrimination. " A man who has been trained to think on one subject only will never be a good judge even in that one." Though the " First in Greats " will not forthwith be a good lawyer or landlord, civil servant or business man, when he does apply himself to these vocations and to the special studies they require, he should soon outdistance those who have concentrated solely on learning the tricks of the trade. So from Jowett's Balliol have issued men like Asquith, Curzon and Lang, with a masculine grasp, within fairly wide limits versatile, and marked by a certain " magnanimity," contrasting with those " little minds " which according to Burke " go ill with a great empire."

Judged by this standard Redbrick, as yet, falls woefully short. The following are some of the reasons for this.

First, it is the *raison d'être* of Redbrick to be cheap and to be local. It was founded as a piece of " university extension," in order to bring university education to the doors of those who had not the means or the enterprise to seek it in the existing universities. A considerable majority of its students continue to live in their own homes, many travelling long distances daily by train or tram. Most of them take comparatively little part in the corporate life of the university, their hours being from 9.30 to 4.30 and mainly filled with lectures and laboratories. Their social interests, friends and loyalties are apt to remain outside. Also such student organization as there is tends to be on a Faculty basis, so there is little cross-fertilization. Hence, their student years involve for most no new, liberating and enriching experience.

Secondly, it has lacked a tutorial system. Instruction is mostly by lectures and laboratories. There is far less opportunity than at Oxbridge for individual contact between staff and students. The staff are too few for this ; and outside working hours both seniors and juniors are too widely scattered.

Thirdly, its environment is commonly uninspiring. In Truscot's terminology, Redbrick is situated in " Drabtown " and commonly in the slums of Drabtown. Owing partly to restricted means and partly to nineteenth-century taste, its own buildings and their

appointments are too often dispiriting. Inevitably it lacks a historic tradition such as Oxbridge's.

Fourthly, the prestige of Oxbridge is such that, except for prospective technologists and, to a lesser extent, medical students, the schools send all their best pupils to compete for its scholarships; and the vast majority of parents send their children there if they can. Redbrick gets only the leavings. In spite of some significant exceptions the most distinguished teachers tend ultimately to find their way from Redbrick to Oxbridge.

Finally, it has as yet had small success in giving a broad general culture or training in leadership. This is largely due to causes outside its own control. It is often handicapped by its students' antecedents and attitudes. Only a few come from homes with intellectual interests and standards. At school they have specialized early and have been examination-ridden. They lack zest and intellectual independence and they are apt to regard study only as a means to success in examinations which will lead to a step up the social and economic ladder. "You can pick up facts in a scramble . . . but learning to think, to make judgments of freedom and responsibility, requires a measure of peace and freedom from anxiety, and this is denied."[1] At the university their specialization continues and is accentuated; and it is a question whether the academic staff, in their laudable zeal for research and the training of researchers (who will always be the few), have not too often produced the "botched scholar" rather than the "educated man." The Redbrick graduate has usually received a sound technical training in his particular subject. But there can be little confidence that his university will have done much to foster in him that faculty of "judgment," based on a wide outlook, which Newman postulates. It is significant that Redbrick has made comparatively little penetration into leading positions in government and administration, such as the higher ranks of the Civil Service or the judicial bench. These are still mainly the preserve of Oxbridge, though such a monopoly is obviously unhealthy.

Most of the flaws in the training provided by Redbrick are due to poverty rather than to policy. Authoritative opinion within the university has for some time been keenly alive to them. At present practically all the universities concerned are planning a very large increase in the ratio of staff to students in order to make possible some tutorial system. They are also planning, on a very large scale, the construction of "Halls," with a view to making residence common and often compulsory. A demand has begun in the universities, and will increase, that the average length of the course

[1] *Blind Guides?* David Paton (S.C.M. Press, 2s.). This little book still has a good deal of relevance, but is unfortunately out of print.

shall be extended from three to four years so as to give more elasticity and reduce cramming. But these reforms can only take effect very gradually; for persons qualified to be university teachers do not at present exist in anything approaching the numbers required, while large-scale building, except for domestic purposes, is notoriously out of the question for many years. In any case they would, at best, reduce the gap between Redbrick and Oxbridge. They represent no original contribution by Redbrick to the "idea of a university."

In the meantime Truscot demands that the process of "creaming" shall stop forthwith, that parents and schoolmasters shall no longer send their choicest exclusively to Oxbridge. This is a challenge to very many of us. So long as we are unconvinced that Redbrick has as much to offer, it may be an impracticable demand, but some rationing of State Scholarships between different universities seems not unreasonable.

The limitations of Redbrick and the difficulties under which it labours are very great, but in comparing it with the opulent and historic Oxbridge we may be blinded to its great distinctive opportunities. Amid the soot and the smoke, it is close to the realities of a vigorous provincial and industrial life. It draws most of its students from strata of society which, till lately, have been little represented at Oxbridge. Thus it has a better access to the outlook and experience of nine-tenths of the population. Further, being placed in a great modern city with its cultural traditions still to form, Redbrick has a unique opportunity for adult education and general social influence which it should seize with increasing imagination and resource.

LIMITATIONS OF OXBRIDGE

Is Newman's idea of a university adequate to the needs of our world to-day, or consonant with our Christian understanding of justice as between man and man? The following criticisms are increasingly made and demand serious attention.

First, it rests on privilege. For instance, it is prohibitively expensive. Even the ordinary non-scholarship student does not pay his way, for he enjoys the amenities of the college provided by endowments accumulated through the centuries. In the past his relatively disinterested and liberal attitude to his studies may well have been due to economic security and the leisure it allows. It is significant that with the increase in the number of women students and of students who have to make their own way with the help of scholarships, this attitude is declining. However attractive it may be, Oxbridge life is a luxury which cannot be widely enjoyed or imitated. The nation needs far more graduates—50 per cent more in the next few years is a sober estimate—and all classes must have

something like equal opportunity. That may mean that Redbrick rather than Oxbridge is likely to be the pattern for the university of the future. Some would say that this university must be conceived partly as a technical school for the brain-working classes and that the imponderables on which Newman set such store must be dispensed with.

Secondly, in the past the characteristic product of Oxbridge, as Newman conceives him, has been the "gentleman amateur." This may have been just what was wanted in the nineteenth century, when there was a stable society with a common sense of values and the leadership of an aristocratic minority was generally accepted. To-day, a more stringent technical training is indispensable and the "enlightened expert" is replacing the "gentleman amateur." Now that vocational training has become so arduous it cannot be postponed to a late stage in education. Even if the Redbrick curriculum in the past was unduly narrow, cultural training must henceforward be acquired in the course of and out of vocational training rather than apart from and before it. The instruments of this cultural training will be less the Classics than the modern social sciences which will teach, e.g. the doctor or the engineer to understand the indirect social consequences of his professional actions. The fact that Oxbridge itself is moving in this direction is one sign that Newman's ideal is no longer sufficient.

Thirdly, it has some of the defects of a hothouse. It is provincial in Matthew Arnold's sense of "the fierce, settled, narrow, provincial misconception of the whole relative value of one's own things and the things of others." The world of the Senior Common Room, with its "shop" and its esoteric wit, for all its intellectual brilliance, is in danger of becoming a little too self-sufficient and too one-sidedly critical at the expense of creativeness. Unlike Redbrick, whose governing body contains a large lay element, Oxbridge is an example of almost pure guild socialism; the teachers have complete control. But is this altogether an advantage? It may mean that the university is able to insulate itself the more effectively against the world outside.

Finally, Oxbridge has stood for the values represented by the humanities as against an outlook dominated by the natural sciences. She has preserved and transmitted a heritage derived from Greece, Rome and Palestine. But it is powerfully argued that, however steeped in the culture of the past he may be, no one is truly educated unless he can appreciate the vital currents of thought of his own age. To-day, both among learned and unlearned, those currents have largely been determined by science and technology. The Arts men who have insufficient familiarity with these to know what they are really after and to understand the fundamental ideas behind them cannot see life steadily and whole. Some fuller integration

of Arts and Science may be required in the education of the undergraduate than either Oxbridge or Redbrick has yet attempted. "The university is not meeting the needs of our time . . . because it does not understand the times in which we are living very much more profoundly than the leaders of society outside the universities" (David Paton).

That there is substance in these criticisms those who know Oxbridge intimately find it hard to deny. On the other hand, modern developments at Oxbridge have gone far to meet some of them. Oxbridge is less the preserve of privilege than it was; it has forged many new links with the wider life of society and it has made increasingly adequate provision for the natural and social sciences. In some respects indeed it is leading the way in this field. But whether Oxbridge shows any signs as yet of effectively reintegrating the university ideal in a way adequate to the needs of the present day is another question to which a far less positive answer can be given.

SHOULD A UNIVERSITY BASE ITSELF ON, OR INCULCATE, A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE? HOW FAR SHOULD IT CONCERN ITSELF WITH QUESTIONS INVOLVING DEEP-SEATED PASSIONS AND PREJUDICES?

This is the most far-reaching of all questions confronting the university to-day. In British universities it is only now beginning to be asked with any urgency and there is, as yet, no kind of consensus of opinion. But a number of views are current.

Taboo

This is the Redbrick tradition. The circumstances of Redbrick's origin in reaction from the Oxbridge of the early nineteenth century, unreformed and ridden by denominational tests as it was, have given its authorities an aversion to handling matters of religious and political controversy which approaches to a "complex." That which is emotionally exciting and is apt to generate heat rather than light has appeared to them inimical to the disinterested and objective approach proper to a university. Also no teacher or student was to enjoy privileges or to be discriminated against on account of his convictions. The nonconformist or rationalist was to be at home in the modern university equally with the churchman, and so the university itself must steer clear of the turbid waters of sectarian controversy. To-day there is the further question whether any other policy is possible even if it were desirable. In the region of ultimate convictions could the university, if it would, do other than reflect the melancholy confusion and divisions of the modern world?

But is not such a policy the abandonment of a university's most important function? It will then offer guidance in all things

subsidiary, but not in the attainment of the one thing needful. On that showing a university can train a man to be a chemist or a linguist ; but what he should do with his chemistry or his languages when he has acquired them, whether or why injustice and cruelty or fraud are bad and their opposites are good, whether faith in God is a snare and a delusion or is the only basis on which human life can be lived without disaster—all these things the student must find out for himself as best he may, for a university education can do nothing to help him. *If* you want a bomb, the chemistry department will teach you how to make it ; *if* you want a cathedral, the department of architecture will teach you how to build it ; *if* you want a healthy body, the department of physiology and medicine will teach you how to tend it. But when you ask whether and why you should want bombs or cathedrals or healthy bodies and what you should do with them when you have got them, the university must be content to be impotent and dumb. In living their lives students are left " the sport of every random gust." But for the educator this is abdication.

Neutrality

On this view the university teacher should expound and examine philosophies of life, while carefully refraining from sponsoring or inculcating any one of them *ex cathedra*. He should aim at objectivity. His task is speculative, not practical ; it is to increase understanding, not to make proselytes. For him every question should be an open question, every conclusion liable to revision. The responsibility for immediate, practical application is not his, and, if it were, would hamper the free play of his intelligence.

" In this world rocking beneath and around us, where is theory to be worked out, where are social and economic problems to be analysed, where are theory and facts to be brought face to face, where is the truth, welcome or unwelcome, to be told, where are men to be trained to ascertain and to tell it, where . . . is conscious, deliberate and irresponsible thought to be given to the task of reshaping this world of ours to our own liking, unless, first and foremost, in the university ? " (Flexner).

But, in the conditions of to-day, is not such an attitude " irresponsible " in a bad sense ? " Very few students," said an acute observer just before the war, " have compelling convictions." To-day, however, more and more desperately, students, like other people, are groping for some basis of certainty on which to live. This hunger is, of course, world-wide. " The young," says Dr. Kotschnig in his introduction to *The Universities in a Changing World*, " are met by teachers whom they do not understand and who do not understand them. They are hungering for leadership and there is hardly a man to lead them ; they long for certainty and

there is no idea that can grip them." It is indeed from Oxbridge itself that one observer has written, "One symptom which has struck me is the rarity with which undergraduates to-day express or feel any deep respect for or debt to dons as having opened up to them a whole attitude to life." Further, is not an education maimed in which the note of challenge to decision is never heard and teachers transmit to students their own unconscious fear of deep commitments?

In any case, it is now being urged, academic "objectivity" is a sham. In politics it always, in effect, favours the *status quo*. In ethics and religion its implication is negative. If you omit them from your educational system, you do not teach nothing about them, you teach that they are to be omitted. If, in treating them, you consistently sit on the fence, you imply that they are not among the issues on which decision is imperative. You imply that, at best, they are luxuries for the few rather than necessities for the many and that they are concerned with "over-beliefs," private fancies and poetical embellishments which are not essential for the daily conduct of life, and on which any really reasoned conviction is unattainable. And you do not teach this explicitly in a way which would challenge criticism; you propagate it far more insidiously and irresistibly as a tacit but all-pervading assumption, a fundamental habit of mind.

Arnold Nash argues that a Christian recognition of the reality of sin shows objectivity to be a delusion. To think you are without bias, when you are really biassed, may be itself the most dangerous kind of bias; to your original bias you add blindness and presumption. The scholar too commonly shares the unconscious assumptions and prejudices of his community and adds others arising out of his own special circumstances and calling.

Commitment

If a detached impartiality is neither praiseworthy nor possible, it may be that the university, like the individual, should choose a philosophy of life by the light of which all its special studies will be integrated. This appears to be the Roman Catholic theory and practice. Such a university, if its philosophy of life is Christian, will recognize theology as the queen of the sciences. An essential part of its own function will be to turn out good Christians (or Catholics). It will set itself to diffuse a Christian atmosphere and its teaching will be based on Christian presuppositions. Its Christian bias will be not shamefaced, but explicit.

At Redbrick to-day such a Christian programme is obviously not practical politics. Indeed if Redbrick should adopt any platform, it might more probably be "democratic" or even "communist" than specifically Christian. At Oxbridge the situation is

more complex. A century ago, before the abolition of "tests," it really set itself to be a "Christian university" in this sense. To some extent, officially, it still does so; witness the place given to theology as the premier Faculty, its college chapels, University Church, and even the formulas for the conferment of degrees. But probably nothing like 50 per cent of dons or undergraduates are convinced Christians. Thus Oxbridge's position is equivocal, and there is a rift between theory and practice, form and substance, which produces tension.

Even if such a "Christian university" were more practicable than it is, it is not clear that it is desirable in our contemporary situation. At the university stage it may not be well to shelter students from the intellectual stresses of the outside world. Indeed there is a Christian value in that intellectual integrity and stringent examination and re-examination of all assertions, for which the liberal university has professed to stand. To be shown how much our judgments are influenced unconsciously by interested motives is most salutary; but it is not a reason for giving up all effort to see straight. Judicial impartiality, no doubt, is difficult and always imperfect, but the judge's attitude is still widely different from the advocate's. When it is Fascist or Communist universities which impose tests of orthodoxy, we see easily how misplaced such things are.

A "Quartum Quid?"

None of the previous views seem satisfactory, and Christians who give thought to these matters are groping towards a fourth on some such lines as these.

(*a*) The policy of "taboo" must be reversed. As a minimum necessity, negative should be replaced by positive neutrality and impartial exclusion of "dangerous" topics by impartial inclusion. This involves, first, that teachers should be encouraged to feel that frank discussion with students of fundamental questions and of their own opinions about them, so far from being a breach of professional duty, is what that duty requires. If they have nothing better to offer, by all means let them offer their own doubts and difficulties. Of course this entails the abandonment of any policy of "protection" of students from contamination, which is anyhow out of place at their age. Secondly, it means the encouragement of voluntary societies which discuss such issues, whether conservative or communist, religious or anti-religious. On the Christian side, this is the opportunity for a body such as the S.C.M. to give a witness, spiritual and intellectual, which is really convincing. "Certainly it is no part of the duty of a university to inculcate any particular philosophy of life. But it is its duty to assist its students to formulate their own philosophies of life so that they may not go out into

the world maimed and useless. It should stimulate and train them, not of course necessarily to think alike, but at least to think and to think strenuously about the great issues of right and wrong, of liberty and government, on which both for the individual and for the community a balanced judgment is essential to a rational life" (U.G.C. Quinquennial Report, 1936).

(*b*) The university should recognize as a fundamental task the training of its members to detect and examine all pre-suppositions, particularly their own. This has been much neglected. As David Paton shrewdly remarks: "The university has not yet learned to examine the really important prejudices. . . The result is that we send forth annually thousands of graduates who are as full of political, religious and moral prejudices as the homes from which they come. Nor are such prejudices unknown among members of university staffs." Such a deep analysis of assumptions is anyhow required by intellectual integrity. But, in the light of his doctrine of sin, the Christian university teacher should bring to it a special insight into the impulses impeding such integrity in himself and his group and a special determination to face and to overcome them.

(*c*) So long as the community as a whole is confused and divided in mind, the policy of official neutrality cannot be wholly abandoned by the universities. But it can be substantially modified. The war has shown that, beneath all sectional differences, there are some fundamental principles for which the nation, corporately, is prepared to stand, and that these may have to be made explicit and to be defended. These include a few elementary ethical principles of honesty, kindliness, justice, etc., some kind of basic belief in democracy, however difficult to formulate, and even some rather shadowy Christianity. Similarly a number of modern universities have for some time had periodical "university services," and, in several, faculties of theology have been or are being introduced. Thus the institution as a whole is not merely neutral. In some degree it has a philosophy of life and a spiritual basis which it will try to reflect in its communal life and in its public ceremonies, though not all its members will subscribe to this and none must be proscribed for their opinions. But this general commitment is extremely limited, and it is wrong to seek to force the pace beyond what truly represents the communal mind. A policy of capturing the university by quiet and almost surreptitious infiltration into key-positions would be no more commendable if practised by Christians than by Communists.

(*d*) However candidly he expounds his own convictions, the university lecturer should not be a propagandist. In teaching it is not his job to be a preacher or an apologist, but to promote understanding and to assist his pupils to evolve their own philosophies of

life. Every philosophy tutor understands and acts on this distinction. For example, the Master of Balliol's treatment of social issues in the lecture-room and on a political platform will be widely different. Matthew Arnold said of Burke that he was so great just because he "saturated politics with thought." This admirably expresses the distinctive function of a university in regard not only to politics, but to ethics and religion.

Universities were first produced as the flower of Christian civilization. To-day they are confused and distracted like the world in which they are set, and it must be the aim of Christians to win them to a new coherence and purposefulness in the service of Christ. But we must understand clearly the terms on which alone this can properly be done. To try to put a top-dressing of Christianity upon an institution which, in its fundamental outlook, remains indifferent or hostile to Christianity, is worse than useless. In a natural desire to give itself a facade of unity the university in the future may conceivably incline to such an arrangement. Christians in the university world will do well to resist any temptation to exploit that possibility. They will be at least as much concerned in these days to emphasize the university's need for genuine freedom as to emphasize its need for unity. But they will also insist that such freedom must be a real freedom to face and answer the most important questions that exercise the human spirit. They will insist on the right of the theologian, not yet everywhere conceded, to be heard in the university, but they will not seek any privilege or protection for him. They will indeed assert their belief that Christ, the wisdom of God and the power of God, provides the only sure basis on which the life of the university can be built; many will do so, not by cajoling their colleagues into lip-service to this as an ideal, but by striving to demonstrate it in practice in the way in which they handle their own subjects and fulfil their responsibilities as members of a free university.

To help in the performance of this task, Arnold Nash suggests that an order of Christian scholars should be formed. Whether anything so formal or ambitious is necessary may be doubted; but Christians whose vocations lie in the university must certainly see their task more clearly, and set about it with more determination than they have yet done. We began by saying that the universities hold a key-position in the social order. If the battle for the soul of our civilization is not won in the universities, we can hardly hope to succeed anywhere else.

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